

PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday, May 13, 2014

4:30 p.m., Log Cabin Pavilion, Eagle Point Park

PRESENT: Bob Blocker, Robin Kennicker, Ken Klinge, Kate Lydon, Karen Lyness, Evelyn Nadeau and David Schlueter

STAFF PRESENT: Marie Ware, Steve Fehsal, Dan Kroger and Eileen Trimble

MINUTES APPROVED; VOTE: It was moved by Lyness, seconded by Klinge, to approve the minutes of the April 1, 2014, meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

NATIONAL KIDS TO PARKS DAY: Leisure Services Manager Marie Ware told Commissioners that the last couple years the City was asked to join the National Park Trust and communities across the country in proclaiming a "Kids to Parks Day" in May. A proclamation was read at the May 5th Council meeting, proclaiming May 17th as Kids to Parks Day in Dubuque, encouraging adults, children and families to go enjoy a park for a day. Commissioner Nadeau asked if we had ever waived the entrance fee into Eagle Point Park on that day. Manager Ware said no, but we could do that if the Commission wanted to. Commissioners thought it was a good idea and it would encourage people to go to the park.

Staff was directed to send out a news release notifying the public that the entrance fee into Eagle Point Park would be waived on Saturday, May 17th.

REQUEST FROM SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS TO DONATE A PEACE POLE TO CITY AND PLACE IN WASHINGTON PARK; VOTE: Sister Michelle Balek was present representing the Sisters of St. Francis. They plan to mark the 150th anniversary of their founding with 150 days of commemoration, celebration and service. As part of the commemoration the Sisters would like to gift the people of Dubuque with a Peace Pole that would be inscribed with the message "May Peace Prevail on Earth" in eight languages significant to Dubuque's history. The Sisters propose that the Peace Pole be placed in Washington Park because that venue would provide a visual reminder of peace and the importance of diversity to the many people who gather, utilize or pass through this park on a daily basis. The Sisters would like to present the Peace Pole to the City at their public celebration event on October 5, 2014, since October 5th is the Sunday closest to St. Francis' Feast Day.

Commissioner Schlueter asked how tall the pole was and Sister Balek said it was 8 feet tall. After discussion, it was decided Washington Park site was acceptable.

It was moved by Nadeau, seconded by Kennicker, to recommend acceptance of the Peace Pole gift from the Sisters of St. Francis to the City Council. The motion passed unanimously.

HILLCREST SERVICES REQUESTRE TOBACCO-FREE PARKS AND RECREATIONAL AREAS; VOTE: Vicki Gassman from Hillcrest Family Services was in attendance representing a community partnership group working for Tobacco Use Prevention and Control. The group is working on the cessation of smoking in youth so they are trying to reach kids where they play, etc. They have a grant and are trying to get at least one park that is tobacco, nicotine and smoke free. They are willing to help in any way they can – do a survey of citizens or a needs assessment to see how citizens feel.

Mr. **Blocker** said buildings and pavilions are already smoke free and he thinks totally smoke free is over the top and can't support it. Ms. **Kennicker** can't support a complete ban, feels we would lose income if that type of rule was put in place. Ms. **Nadeau** said the City is already following state laws for parks, golf course, outside areas, etc. She doesn't like cigarettes but we need to be consistent and we allow liquor in some parks and not in others – maybe there could be a middle ground like a designated smoking area. Ms. **Lydon** did some research and all the reasons for going totally tobacco and smoke free seem to be related to children so she would possibly support the ban at pools, ball fields or within so many feet of a playground area.

Manager Ware said this is a request at this point and the Commission can decide how they want to work with it. Mr. **Schlueter** asked if Ms. Gassman could come back with a less extensive request at a future meeting. Ms. Gassman clarified that the request is for the City to designate one entire park or trail which would be tobacco and smoke free. Ms. **Nadeau** would be open to one designated park ~~as tobacco and smoke free or a designated area where no tobacco or cigarettes would be allowed if there was a designated smoking area included~~. She felt it would be taking away a right to ban the tobacco and smoking since it is legal to smoke if you are the correct age. Ms. **Lydon Lyness** said she could see the ban in playground areas but felt it would be too confusing.

Ms. Gassman said the group could do a community survey with questions approved by the Park and Recreation Commission. Ms. Lyness asked how they get the survey out to citizens and Ms. Gassman said Telegraph Herald, Mediacom, nonprofits, Wellness Coalition, Dubuque Advertiser, YM-YWCA and possibly the city's website.

It was moved by Blocker, seconded by Kennicker, to deny the request for Commission support of tobacco and smoke free parks and trails at this time. The motion passed unanimously.

PARK DIVISION
REPORT:

Park Division Manager Steve Fehsal updated Commissioners:

■ **Miller Riverview** Park is under water so it is not looking good for Memorial Day; staff will put out a news release and refunds will have to be issued. ■ There were 600 cars admitted to Eagle Point Park free for the Boy Scout's **Mother's Day breakfast**. Staff will tally the number of cars that enter free on "Kids to Parks Day" on May 17th. ■ Seeding was done at the **Usha** Park parking lot and trees/shrubs will be planted next week. ■ The **irrigation** project for the All Veterans' Memorial is moving forward. The veterans' are paying for their part of the irrigation and will re-sod their area. ■ **Vandalism** at Eagle Point Park: The repairs to the historic covered bench at Eagle Point Park are under way. Beams were donated by Tony LoBianco; stone work was donated by John Gronen; shingles were donated by Spahn and Rose and the kids are doing the roofing work. Mr. Fehsal will do a Telegraph Herald article to thank all the workers and donations to repair the vandalism.

■ Staff began planting **flowers** today at the Port of Dubuque and next week will be putting out the hanging flower baskets. ■ Crews are working hard to stay on top of the **grass cutting** that needs to be done. ■ **Staffing**: Jeff Steuer was promoted to the **Foreman** position, vacant since Gerry Apel's retirement. With

Jeff's promotion, a **Maintenance worker** position becomes vacant and there are also vacant Park Ranger and Horticulturist positions. With the hiring freeze we can't fill these positions at this time but we are working on the Civil Service test and list for **Horticulturist** to be ready when hiring is approved. The City Manager approved changing the **Park Ranger** position so it is no longer a law enforcement position. The patrol trucks will be modified a little so there are no lights or sirens. The job description has been revised and a Civil Service test will be developed.

■ The **Jule** requested running the **trolley** through Eagle Point Park on a regular basis. They would go up to the turn-around by the Eagle to drop people off and then go back out. We would not charge entrance fee to the trolley since it is City-run. They will start the route on May 26th for a trial period and track usage.

Mr. Fehsal told commissioners he asked Health Services Manager to check with her animal control people about reports of **dog bites**. There have been no reported dog bites on parks or trails where pets are allowed since the ordinance was changed but she said there were not many before the ordinance change. Park staff did not hear of any dog bites. There has been some pet waste everywhere but it has been minimal. Staff will keep track of number of pets in parks again this season.

RECREATION
DIVISION
REPORT:

Recreation Division Manager Dan Kroger informed Commissioners:

■ **Pools** are scheduled to open Memorial Day weekend. Flora Pool is ready to go and we are working on Sutton. ■ **Golf** rounds are up 11% from 2013 and golf cart revenue is up 28%. We are having problems with the irrigation because of weather, frost and the age of the system. ■ **Marina** opened May 1st even though the flood gates are closed for actual boats; outdoor signage is up and looks very nice. • The first special event we are having is a used boat show scheduled for May 31st. We are partnering with Telegraph Herald. Telegraph Herald is sponsoring the ads. • Brian Feldott was hired as the **new Recreation Supervisor** for adult and youth sports. He started last Monday.

Commissioner **Blocker** suggested doing a full page ad in the paper to advertise the short term slip rental because there is a real market for it. Commissioner **Klinge** asked if all golf leagues start in April and do the leagues have the right to cancel their league or is it a pro shop staff decision? Mr. Kroger said a couple of the leagues are decided by the league captain.

MANAGER
REPORT:

Leisure Services Manager Marie Ware informed Commissioners:

■ Leisure Services Manager Marie Ware told Commissioners that the department received an **anonymous letter** from an individual that drove tour buses 20 years ago. The person drove through one of our parks and in order to give as much room as possible to an oncoming car on narrow road, sideswiped a rock retaining wall. There was considerable damage to the bus but not much damage to the wall in person's opinion. The individual is now dying of cancer, thoughts of this incident came back, and he or she felt they should take care of it. The person estimated it would have cost \$200 for repairs 20 years ago, plus interest, so sent a check for \$300. Ms. Ware thought it was very nice to come forth now and suggested a tree be planted in a park with the donation.

- The City Council approved the **budget cuts** as presented and recommended by City Manager and Budget Director to offset the FY 2014 budget shortfall. There were a lot of park projects eliminated, including the three mini parks and greenhouse. The eliminated projects can be considered again in FY 2016.
- Renovation of the second floor of the **Multicultural Family Center** is moving forward and will be done in a couple phases so the Center can remain open during renovation. When the project is completed the Human Rights Department will move to offices on the MFC second floor, along with MFC office staff. The project includes installing an elevator. Staff will be working on an RFP for architectural services.
- Tuckpointing and replacing the roof on the **Five Flags Theater** is a project that will be moving forward with RFP process for engineering/architectural services.
- **Chaplain Schmitt Island** planning process has continued. The consultants and City Council have a work session scheduled June 2nd at 5:00 p.m. The consultants will share analysis and preliminary alternatives.
- A presentation was made recently to the City Council on landscaping for the **Upper Bee Branch**. The low bridge has been eliminated because of safety concerns. There is a 45-minute video on the city website if interested.
- City staff is working on the **Street Tree and Landscaping Policy**. Staff was directed to look at ways that we could allow citizens to plant flowers, bushes, etc. in the right-of-way between the curb and sidewalk.
- **AmeriCorps** Director Deb Bell resigned to take a full time job at Clarke University so that position will need to be filled.

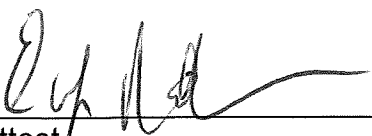
Commissioner Kennicker asked if someone was overseeing the MFC since director left. Manager Ware said there is a transition plan in place which included moving Assistant Director to Acting Director and Site Supervisor to Acting Assistant Director. Cinco de Mayo was held at Washington Park on May 3rd and they had a great day and great crowd. Commissioner Nadeau asked if the hiring process would include some emphasis on possibly hiring people in the community that are familiar with the MFC and its mission.

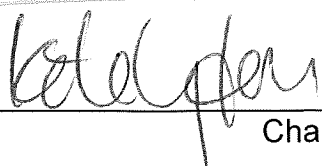
OTHER
BUSINESS:

Commissioner Lydon asked the Commission to reconsider proposing that leashed and licensed **pets** be allowed **in city parks**, especially since the funds for new dog park were cut due to the budget shortfall and it affects a lot of Dubuquers. She would like the original ordinance that included all parks except Eagle Point and Murphy to be reviewed, along with the most recent approved version. Commissioners agreed the item will be placed on the June meeting agenda.

ADJOURN;
VOTE:

It was moved by Blocker, seconded by Lydon, that the meeting be adjourned at 5:55 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.


Attest


Chairperson